

MARCH 26, 1976

THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S WEST BANK VOTE

ANNCR: VOA NEWS ANALYST RONALD J. DUNLAVEY MAKES THESE  
OBSERVATIONS ABOUT THE NOW-CONCLUDED UNITED NATIONS  
SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE ON THE WEST BANK PROBLEM:

VOICE: THERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT IF BOTH SIDES IN A QUARREL  
ARE ANGRY WITH YOU, YOU MUST BE TAKING A BALANCED AND  
OBJECTIVE POSITION. THE UNITED STATES CAN TRY TO TAKE COMFORT  
IN THIS AXIOM TODAY AS BOTH ISRAEL AND THE ARAB STATES  
CRITICIZE IT FOR THE STANCE IT ADOPTED DURING THE SECURITY  
COUNCIL'S DEBATE ON THE WEST BANK ISSUE.

ISRAEL IS UNHAPPY BECAUSE OF A SPEECH DELIVERED IN THE COURSE  
OF THE DEBATE BY THE NEW UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR, WILLIAM  
SCRANTON. MR. SCRANTON REITERATED AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO  
ISRAELI SECURITY, AND DESCRIBED ISRAEL'S ADMINISTRATION OF THE  
HOLY PLACES AS "PUNCTILIOUS." BUT HE ALSO RESTATED THE  
AMERICAN BELIEF THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO PERMANENT CHANGES IN  
THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM---AND THAT SUBSTANTIAL ISRAELI  
SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK TERRITORIES ARE ILLEGAL  
AND AN OBSTACLE TO NEGOTIATIONS. ISRAELI PRESS REACTION WAS  
HIGHLY CRITICAL, AND OFFICIAL DISAPPROVAL WAS REPORTEDLY  
REGISTERED IN THE FORM OF A COMPLAINT BY THE ISRAELI  
AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON.

THE ARAB STATES, ON THE OTHER HAND, ARE UNHAPPY WITH THE  
AMERICAN VETO OF THURSDAY'S RESOLUTION CRITICIZING ISRAELI  
ACTIONS ON THE WEST BANK. THEY FEEL THAT THE RESOLUTION WAS  
WORDED MODERATELY ENOUGH SO THAT WASHINGTON COULD AT LEAST  
HAVE SETTLED FOR A VOTE OF ABSTENTION RATHER THAN A VETO.

IN EXPLAINING THE VETO, AMBASSADOR SCRANTON ARGUED THAT THE RESOLUTION "DOES NOT CORRESPOND TO THE ACTUAL SITUATION IN THE AREA." PARTS OF IT, FOR EXAMPLE---SAID MR. SCRANTON---ARE BASED ON THE JUDGEMENT THAT ISRAEL IS PERSISTING IN A POLICY AIMED AT CHANGING THE RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF JERUSALEM. IN WASHINGTON'S VIEW, HE SAID, THIS CONCLUSION IS INCORRECT. FURTHERMORE, HE ADDED, WASHINGTON FEELS THAT THE RESOLUTION WOULD NOT HELP THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS JUST AT A TIME WHEN EVERY EFFORT IS BEING MADE TO REGAIN MOMENTUM FOR THAT PROCESS.

AND SO, WITH GENERAL DISSATISFACTION ALL AROUND, ENDS THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S WEST BANK DEBATE. UNFORTUNATELY, IT DOES NOT MEAN THE END OF THE WEST BANK TROUBLES. IN THE VIEW OF MANY OBSERVERS, THEY COULD CONTINUE AND BECOME WORSE---THUS EMPHASIZING EVEN MORE THE NEED NOT FOR CONDEMNATORY U.N. RESOLUTIONS BUT FOR DEFINITE NEGOTIATING MOVEMENT TOWARD A SETTLEMENT. IN THAT RESPECT, HOWEVER, IT IS POSSIBLE TO FIND ONE POTENTIALLY POSITIVE RESULT OF THIS WEEK'S DEBATE. IT DEMONSTRATED THAT THE REPRESENTATIVES OF ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION CAN SIT AT THE SAME NEGOTIATING TABLE WITHOUT INCENDIARY CONSEQUENCES. THIS MAY NOT BE EXACTLY PROGRESS IN THE TANGIBLE SENSE, BUT MORE THAN ONE DIPLOMAT HAS EXPRESSED THE VIEW THAT IT MAY SOME DAY TURN OUT TO BE A USEFUL PRECEDENT.